



Deep Strike Tribune

January 2006



Battalion Commander

Greetings from surprisingly cold Iraq! Despite the preconceived notions that many have of the climate here in Southwest Asia, fortunately we arrived here at a time of year other than when the thermometer reads well above 100 degrees on a daily basis. Although it was difficult leaving loved ones behind – a task even more difficult during the holiday season – the Soldiers of Task Force Deep Strike deployed and arrived here in Southwest Asia over a period of little more than a week. Everyone arrived safely, and we were able to conduct some training and receive our equipment in Kuwait before “crossing the berm” and deploying to forward operating locations in Iraq. As the commander of this great organization, perhaps the thing that best struck me as we deployed was the commitment, motivation and focus of our Soldiers. Furthermore, I was struck by the support and understanding of the families and loved ones we left behind as we deployed. I could not be prouder to be associated with the great men and women that comprise Task Force Deep Strike; and likewise I could not be humbled more than I am in appreciation of the sacrifices that our families make while we answer the call to duty.

To the spouses, the children, the parents, the brothers and sisters, the aunts and uncles and others reading this – know that your loved one is the best trained and equipped that they possibly could be. While it's true that there is no shortage of “bad guys” in this country, rest assured that we have the upper hand and that the training, proficiency and sheer will demonstrated by your loved ones will serve them well over the course of the year that we are here.

The task force (what the battalion is called with the integration of the forward support company to our ranks) is deployed principally to two locations in Iraq. The Alpha Battery Renegades, to include some Soldiers attached from Headquarters Battery, and C/589th Forward Support Company (now known as 67th FSC) are located in the western part of Iraq. The remainder of the task force is deployed to the northern part of Iraq.

Given the different environments, missions assigned, and different units being supported by our Soldiers each of our batteries or companies lives in different conditions and will have vastly different experiences in terms of quality of life as well as ability for frequent communication back home. Currently Alpha Battery is operating in a much more austere location, with vastly different living conditions and less frequent access to amenities (such as regular Internet, e-mail, or telephone use) than the rest of the battalion. This is not because the Renegades are being punished – but is simply because that's the state of affairs in this war-torn country. Rest assured that we're doing everything we can to upgrade and improve the location Alpha Battery occupies – but also realize that they have a tough, yet important mission to accomplish in winning this fight we're engaged in.

Likewise, understand that we may find ourselves moving to different locations at some point throughout our time here as we ensure we're located in the best positions to accomplish our mission. I tell you this because each Soldier is going to have a different experience over here. Some Soldiers will be able to phone or e-mail home more frequently than others. Some Soldiers will have “better” living conditions than others. None of it is intentional, or because we care more about some Soldiers than others – it's simply a fact of the situation here in Iraq. Command Sgt. Maj. Dwight Morrissey probably best summed it up when listening to a group of Soldiers talk about how one place is “better” than another when he said “whether you're at this camp or that camp it doesn't matter--you're still in Iraq!” (In other words...no matter the living conditions, or access to modern amenities, we're all still away from you – our loved ones.)

So...what can you do to support your Soldier? While some may say “send cookies” or “send toothpaste,” I'd say skip those two – the food in the mess hall is in ample supply and readily available, and there's more tubes of toothpaste, dental floss, and shaving cream floating around than you can shake a stick at. What you can really do is to stay in touch – whether by e-mail, letter or phone call your Soldier makes back home. Nothing makes our day brighter than that contact from friends and loved ones. Getting a letter, opening an e-mail or seeing a picture goes a long way to boosting a Soldier's morale. Likewise, tell your loved one over here to drop a note back to you as well. While some might not say it outwardly, we all know that those of you on the home front need the support and encouragement as well – for we're in this together. If you haven't heard from your Soldier yet, I've included the mailing addresses at the end of this newsletter so that you can write them and tell them you've checked the mailbox every day and haven't seen that letter home yet!

Listed below are a few items I'm passing on to either ask for your support, to brag about or simply to keep you abreast of change:

Operational Security and Prohibitions. Just a brief reminder that there are certain things you should not discuss with your Soldier while we're over here. Discussing over the telephone or via e-mail such things as when we move locations, where

we're moving to, routes we're taking, or facets of the operations that we're undertaking all violate operational security. Discussions of this nature could result in your loved one facing disciplinary issues, but more importantly, these types of discussions put all of us at risk, as there's a capable threat out there waiting to exploit this information and use it against us. Some family members have asked about cell phones. Again, to reiterate things – our Soldiers are not allowed to possess a cell phone over here, so please don't mail them one in hopes it will make communication easier.

Reenlistments. Since we've arrived here in theater, 35 Soldiers have reenlisted. We held a mass reenlistment ceremony the first week we were in Kuwait, where 21 great Americans raised their right hand and pledged to continue serving our nation. The Army's offering some great reenlistment bonuses now, and these Soldiers combined will receive a total of nearly \$325,000 in bonuses (with several Soldiers qualifying for the maximum \$15,000 bonus). Even better, the bonuses are all tax-exempt as a result of reenlisting in a combat zone!

Unit Redesignation. As part of the Army's reorganization efforts our forward support company has received a new name. The unit once known as C/589th Forward Support Company is now known as the 67th Forward Support Company. For a brief time it appeared that the unit was going to be redesignated the 575th Forward Support Company. Regardless of the name, however, we've still got the same great Soldiers and we'll still call 'em "Crazy Horse."

In closing, thanks for your support and understanding, and let me brag one more time when I say that you ought to be proud of your Soldier – for he or she truly epitomizes the greatness of our nation. You've got every reason to be proud of your Soldier...I know I am.

Lt. Col. Mark Johnson
Deep Strike!

Headquarters Battery – *Warriors*

Greetings Warriors and Family Members. By the time you read this everyone will have closed on Forward Operating Base Q-West. It has been nearly a month for most of the battery since we left Fort Hood. Most of the month was spent training in Kuwait preparing the battery for operations in Iraq. I know most of you think your husbands finish training prior to leaving the United States, however while most of that is true, there were a few things that the battery need to train on before escorting our equipment on a ground assault convoy into Iraq. A good number of the Soldiers went through convoy live fire training that was taught by some ex-military civilians. The Soldiers could not stop talking about how much they got out of the training. The battery also helped Alpha and Bravo battery complete an MLRS live fire shoot before moving into Iraq. A few Soldiers and I, along with the battalion fire direction center, facilitated the firing of a large number of rockets that helped qualify all launcher sections and platoons. Upon completing our training in Kuwait the battery moved by air and ground into our current location in Iraq.

Before leaving Kuwait, seven Soldiers decided to reenlist from four years to indefinite. Most of the Soldier reenlisted during a battalion reenlistment ceremony where 21 Soldiers reenlisted for a total bonus of nearly \$325,000 tax free. The Soldiers that reenlisted were SSG Simmons, SSG Mahan, SGT Willis, SPC Nava, SPC Sale, SPC Bishop, and PFC Jelinski. So if you see any of their spouses around town congratulate them.

I know everyone wants to know what the conditions are like for us here in Iraq. Originally everyone thought it was going to be a 180 degrees difference from where we were first thought to be going. That is not true. FOB Q-West has a great dining facility, huge morale, welfare and recreation (MWR) tent with a 250 seat movie theater, computers, and phones. There is also a large workout facility that has a full length basketball court and an aerobics room. The living conditions on the FOB will be changing for the better here in the next month. Currently the Soldiers are living in big open rooms with beds, but in a month or so when the mobile living containers are complete Soldiers will share a 20' x 8' container that has heating, air conditioning and possibly a refrigerator. The conditions on the FOB are much better than we thought they would be.

Everyone is excited and prepared to take over the mission from the unit we are replacing. Your husbands have put in many hours training and preparing each other for what lies ahead of us. I know everyone one of them is prepared and will be in good hands. I hope all the families had a Merry Christmas and are enjoying the holidays. If anyone needs anything or has any questions don't hesitate to call Angela, she will do what she can to get the information or help out in any way. Everyone enjoy the rest of the holidays and Happy New Year to all the Warrior Families.

CPT Matt Childers
Warriors

A Battery – Renegades

After much preparation and many heartfelt good-byes, Alpha Battery gathered their gear and boarded flights out of Texas on their way to Kuwait. Some flights stopped in Germany, some in the Emerald Isle, but all the Renegades were reunited at their temporary home in Camp Virginia.

Camp Virginia gave everyone a chance to adjust to life overseas. For some, it was a second or even third visit to the small desert nation on the Persian Gulf. For others, it was the first taste of life in the Middle East. Younger Soldiers took their queue from the likes of PFC Evans and SPC McGowan, both veterans. The couple of weeks spent there were well spent, with plenty of training in preparation for the northward march to war. Soldiers fired weapons at the range, some went on a convoy live-fire exercise, and launcher crews performed maintenance on their equipment to ensure our combat readiness. Our training culminated with one last exercise: firing rockets into the thin, desert air.

Unfortunately, the desert air was not accommodating in the least. We moved out to the firing point through wind, dust storms, even rain. Even so, Alpha proved once again that field artillery is the Army's only all-weather asset. Firing over 20 rockets, Alpha Battery completed its in-theater training. The Renegades were ready for war.

Just days before putting Kuwait in the rear-view mirror, Alpha Battery received new Soldiers and equipment – attachments with specific assignments and abilities, rounding out the battery with the ability to be self-sustaining and help accomplish its mission.

The flight to Al Asad was pleasantly uneventful. An Air Force C-130 aircraft took the main body into Iraq, after which Marine Sea Stallion helicopters took them the rest of the way to the COP (Combat Out-Post) where we are located. Left behind was a small element to take the vehicles and equipment over the slow road northward.

The movement north was called the Ground Assault Convoy. It consisted of up-armored HMMWVs, motivated men, and over forty trucks and trailers carrying the firing assets vital to Alpha Battery's mission. Among the men were SPC Janda, PFC Klein, and CPL Ajeti, our gunners. After traveling a distance in excess of 600 miles across the treacherous roads of Kuwait and Iraq, the convoy arrived at our combat out-post on December 26th. The reunion was a welcome, if belated, Christmas gift to all.

A week of training with B/3-13 FA (an MLRS battery from Fort Sill that we are replacing) followed, training known as "right-seat rides", in preparation for the battle hand-off. Each element of Alpha Battery got with their respective counterparts and observed how they maintained a forward and vigilant posture of war. They taught the Renegades a lot and showed us how things work in our area of responsibility. The men were eager to take over and anticipated the day when we would jump into the driver's seat and show our new found friends how we do it in Alpha Battery.

The final test to show to our counterparts and the Marines that the Renegades are more than ready to take over was to conduct a fire mission consisting of our newest weapon armament: the GMLRS (Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System). We were eager for the new challenge.

Despite all our planning and preparation, Murphy's Law would not let us off easily. Shortly before firing, our all-important computer system, the AFATDS, lost all ability to communicate with our launchers. Essentially, we were blind. We now had to fire degraded operations, that is to say, sending and receiving all mission data through a shaky-at-best radio across the great expanse of desert. It was a task we had practiced many times, but had never actually used to fire given the degree of danger involved. If just one digit was transcribed incorrectly, who knows where those rockets would land? Still, this is a war-zone, and risks are a part of life.

We sent the mission to the first launcher. Almost immediately, its electronics froze and they were rendered useless. The operations center, although reeling from these two set-backs in a row, recovered quickly enough to send the mission to the back-up launcher. Fifteen seconds later, the Renegades sent their first guided multiple-launch rocket systems rocket roaring overhead on its maiden voyage. All six launchers fired that day, including the first launcher that initially lost power, thanks to SSG Burns, SGT Holman, and SPC Carlson's ability to troubleshoot the problem. It was the first time in memory that all six launchers fired together on the same mission. It took less than 30 minutes. Alpha Battery, the Renegades, had succeeded. Some would later say we exceeded all expectations. We simply replied with a nod and a wink, feeling satisfied that we had done our job...nothing more.

CPT Mike Stump

Renegades – No Better Friend, No Worse Enemy

B Battery – *Black Knights*

The Black Knights have finally made it into theater. It's been a hard long road to get here, and we have all made sacrifices to ensure that this year meets with success. The holiday times are tough without the entire family present, but our work here is critical to the safety and stability of not only our nation, but all democracies. The efforts of you and your Soldier are greatly appreciated.

Many of you would like to know what it is like here. Well, we are located in a dry, arid part of Iraq, with red clay soil. One Soldier commented that it looked a little like the surface of Mars. A bit harsh, but there is some truth to that.

Temperatures vary, but the day is typical in the 60's and it will drop to the 40's at night. Winter here is the rainy season, so most of the soil is soggy mud right now. With the high clay content, it sticks to everything.

The Soldiers live in old Iraqi Army barracks, and may move into some new containerized housing units in the next month or so. The CHUs will offer them more privacy, but little else. Both places keep them warm and dry.

Soldiers get three meals a day at a top-rate dining facility. Breakfast offers about four main course choices, plus the standard cereal and breads. Lunch and dinner also offer a choice of about 4-5 main courses to choose from, plus a full salad bar, potato bar, dessert bar, ice cream, and fresh fruit. This place could make you fat if you're not careful.

There is a Moral, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) facility that is immense. They offer Soldiers a wide range of activities like organized sports, Karate, internet, library, movie theater, etc. The list is far too large to name them all.

There are also local vendors here for them to shop, along with a small base PX. They can get all of the essential items from the PX, plus some nice to haves like music and DVDs. The local vendors bring in local goods like leatherworking, pottery, cheap DVDs, and jewelry. Soldiers have no lack of choices when it comes to spending their hard earned money.

I hope that gives you an idea on what it is like here for you Soldier. Please don't forget to write your Soldiers. They love to hear from you and it makes a huge difference in their day.

CPT Jared Sutton
Black Knights!

67th Forward Support Company – *Crazy Horse*

Crazy Horse Team on Ground & Ready to Roll. Crazy Horse sends greetings from the Nineveh Province in Iraq. We've hit ground, split out teams, prepared our equipment, and our Soldiers are ready to provide support to Task Force Deep Strike. It's only been a month since we flew out of Texas, but we've accomplished a great deal in that amount of time. We've trained, worked, played, and even relaxed with the Task Force and are ready to take on any mission.

Our trip to Kuwait went well and we all gathered in our camp to get ready for the move up into Iraq. Within a two week period we downloaded all of our stuff, trained on new tactics, repaired equipment, and tested all of our systems for combat. Nine Soldiers from the Crazy Horse team reenlisted in Kuwait; congratulations to SSG(P) Giles, SSG Terga, SSG Westbrook, SGT Mostiller, SGT Donahue, SGT Perez, SPC Goltz, SPC Phillips, and SPC Walker who took advantage of tax free bonuses worth over \$60,000 combined. We even snuck in time to call and email home from Kuwait when we could.

We traveled to our bases in Iraq by aircraft and ground convoys, but had to split our teams up for different missions throughout Iraq. Most of the Crazy Horse team traveled to Q-West near Mosul, while a few others went west to support missions out west. Even though we are spread out, we are adapting to the communications and remain in contact with each other. All of our teams are linked in and are assisting Deep Strike units.

The holiday season has not been the same without all of you; however, we enjoyed each others camaraderie and warmth of the holiday spirit. Some of us attended Christmas Eve and Christmas chapel services for the post. Chaplain Lee also visited with our entire team up north on Christmas morning and gave us the present of an inspirational holiday message. We all took some time to rest and the Crazy Horse team went to Christmas dinner together at the chow hall that evening; we enjoyed steak, turkey, ham, shrimp, stuffing, potatoes, cranberries, sparkling grape juice, and eggnog.

In closing, we thank you for all of your thoughts and prayers. Your continuous support gets us through the tough times and puts smiles on our faces throughout the day. When you feel down and wish we were back home, know that we keep you near to our hearts and thoughts everyday as well. We all wish you all the best and can't wait to give you our next update; we know that we will have accomplished so much more and that our deployment time will be that much closer to mission accomplishment and our return to you. May God bless and keep you, always.

CPT Andrew Mack
Commander, 67th FSC

P.S. The Army keeps changing our unit's designation and numbers, but know that we are the one and only FSC in the Fires Brigade and that we are the same old Crazy Horse Soldiers you know and love.

Battalion Senior Family Readiness Group Advisor

Greetings, Everyone – and warm wishes for a bountiful and Happy New Year!

I am proud to say that we all made it through the Christmas holidays and most of us have returned from visiting family and friends. A "Thank you" goes out to all who have passed along their holiday/travel itineraries – please continue to do so throughout the remainder of the deployment. It is a tremendous help!

As we approach and cross over into a new year, many of us look back at the most memorable times and events that touched our lives. We tuck them away in our hearts and minds for safekeeping, but they are never far. As military spouses, we each share a universal bond with one another, and especially during the time of deployment we share a common moment and common feelings. The day that we each farewelled our soldier, we felt many emotions, but two seem to stand above the others. The first is the love that we have for our soldier, which only grows stronger during the time away. The second is the pride that we carry, knowing that what our soldier is doing is not only protecting our way of life as we have come to know it, but helping to give that kind of life to those who have never known what it is to be free.

As I browse websites and newspaper articles, I come across a lot of photos of Soldiers. Many of us know and accept that this deployment is just part of the job, but when I look at photos of soldiers who are smiling as they are kneeling and reaching out to touch the hand of an Iraqi child, or offering assistance to an Iraqi citizen, I know that this is more than just a job to them. There is an innate passion there that very few will truly understand, although we may try.

I have never felt so proud to be an American as I have in recent months. No matter if you have survived one deployment or many, there are sacrifices that are made and they are worth it every time. Soldiers will be the first to admit that they could not do what they do without the love and constant support of their family and friends back home. I want express my sincere thanks to everyone for all that they are doing and for the sacrifices being made, so that our soldiers can focus on their tasks at hand. The Family Readiness Groups are strong and we welcome anyone who wishes to be a part of an amazing group of family and friends. I would like to conclude by leaving you with a poem that I found on a military website. It touched my heart and I hope that you will feel touched also.

God Bless our Soldiers and our country, and may he keep us all in His tender care in the New Year. Amen.

With sincere gratitude, Mandy Pierce.

I've Got Your Back

I am a small and precious child, my dad's been sent to fight.
The only place I'll see his face is in my dreams at night.
He will be gone too many days for my young mind to keep track.
I may be sad, but I am proud. My daddy's got your back.

I am a caring mother. My son has gone to war.
My mind is filled with worries that I have never known before.
Everyday I try to keep my thoughts from turning black.
I may be scared, but I am proud. My son has got your back.

I am a strong and loving wife with a husband soon to go.
There are times I'm terrified in a way most never know.
I bite my lip, and force a smile as I watch my husband pack.
My heart may break, but I am proud. My husband's got your back.

I am a Soldier, serving proudly, and I am standing tall.
I fight for freedom, yours and mine, by answering this call.

I do my job while knowing the thanks it sometimes lacks.
Say a prayer that I'll come home. It's me who's got your back.

Task Force Deep Strike Reenlistments

HHS Battery	A Battery	B Battery	67th FSC
SSG Mahan	SSG Goff	SSG Phillips	SSG Giles
SSG Simmons	SSG Glass	SGT Brantley	SSG Terga
SGT Willis	SSG Courtney	SPC Williams	SSG Westbrook
SPC Bishop	SSG Gomez	PFC Cartwright	SGT Perez
SPC Sale	SSG Mewes	PFC Carusetta	SGT Donahue
SPC Nava	SGT Hernandez	PFC Jones	SGT Mostiller
PFC Jelinski	SGT Lenahan	PFC Johnson	SPC Goltz
	SGT Williams		SPC Phillips
	SGT Brann		SPC Walker
	SPC Janda		
	PFC Chagolla		
	PFC Mouton		

Thanks for your continued service to our nation!

MAILING ADDRESSES

SGT Robbie Renegade
A/2-20 FA (MLRS)
ASP Wolf
APO AE

2LT Black Knight
B/2-20 FA (MLRS)
FOB Q-West
APO AE

SPC William Warrior
HHS/2-20 FA (MLRS)
FOB Q-West
APO AE

CPT Crazy Horse
67th FSC
FOB Q-West
APO AE

